# THE ROCK;

OR,

# ALFRED AND ANNA.

## *A SCOTTISH TALE.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY A YOUNG LADY,

*Her First Literary Attempt.*

Lean not on Earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear:
On its sharp point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

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1798.

THE

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## LETTER XII.

ALFRED reposed himself during that day; early as the dawn he arose, and, arrayed in black armour, mounted his proud steed, followed by his faithful people, and proceeded with all haste for the enemy's quarters.

Notwithſtanding every method had been taken to prevent diſcovery, the news reached, and quickly ſpread through Malcomb's domain; conſternation reigned among the vaſſals, not one of whom choſe to be the meſſenger of ſuch bad tidings: at length they determined to acquaint Duncan, an officer of rank, and high in favour with their chief, happening to poſſeſs with him the ſame propenſities to evil, and having miniſtered to his pleaſures, a ſort of friendſhip was cemented between them, if the union of two ſuch diabolical ſouls can be ſo termed.

No time was to be loſt; he directly ſent up his name, with a requeſt to be

inſtantly

inſtantly admitted, as he had ſome thing of importance to communicate; this, as he expected, was immediately granted.

"My Lord," he cried, on entering, "a ſtrange rumour has ſpread through your domain of young Alfred's having returned to his Caſtle, and collected a large force, at the head of which, it is ſaid, he is now marching, with intent to releaſe his mother from captivity."

A malignant ſmile croſſed the features of Malcomb.—"What idle tale is this? Is not the raſh boy dead? did he not yield up his ſpirit in one of my

deepeſt dungeons? and did not theſe eyes behold his breathleſs body, ere it was conſigned to its original dirt?"

"Certainly you beheld a corſe, which you ſuppoſed Alfred's; 'tis not impoſſible you may have been deceived; at all events, 'tis proper we ſhould take meaſures to impede the progreſs of this invader, ſuppoſing him an impoſtor."

"True;" returned Malcomb; "go inſtantly and collect my troops; in the mean time I will examine the fellow who had the charge of this impediment to my ambition; ſhould he have

have deceived me, his life shall be the forfeit of his treachery."

Duncan bowed and retired.

Pale and trembling, the helpless victim of lawless tyranny was brought in; his knees smote each other, and the drop of agony flood upon his forehead: on encountering the furious eye of Malcomb, he fell with his face to the earth.

"Villain," cried the enraged chief, "thy confusion betrays thy guilt—thou hast permitted the upstart Alfred to escape."

"Spare, oh! ſpare my life!" cried the proſtrate wretch, in ſcarce articulate accents, "and I will confeſs."

The attending guards raiſing and ſupporting him, he thus began:

"The night having been uncommonly ſtormy, I aroſe at dawn of day, and went to the dungeon of my priſoner; on entering I ſpoke, but no one anſwered. I called aloud, but ſtill received no reply; ſurpriſed, I quitted the cell, as it was yet too dark to diſcover any object therein; fearing he might be ill, I quickly returned with a lamp, and went to the niche

which

which contained the straw, and where he generally reposed; he was not there. I stood terrified and amazed—how could he escape? I knew I had on the preceding day carefully fastened the door; I took up the lamp, and searching round the dungeon, perceived a large opening and a flight of steps; I instantly descended, and found myself in a narrow passage, which, after pursuing some time its various intricacies, brought me into open air, not far from the sea side. I had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile, when I saw a man stretched on the ground, wrapped in a plaid like that worn by the person of whom I was in pursuit; my heart leaped

with joy—I haſtened towards him; he was dead, his face terribly diſfigured by the wet and cold; I procured a wheelbarrow, and putting the body in, not doubting but it was Alfred's, conveyed it back, laid it on the ſtraw, and having procured a friend to aſſiſt me in ſtopping the breach, I acquainted you with his death: you, my Lord, ſaw the body, ordered it to be buried, and I was happy."

Having finiſhed his recital, he again caſt himſelf at Malcomb's feet, and entreated for mercy.

The

The furious chief bade him cease his damned whine, and ordered the guards to lead him off to instant execution.

Duncan having done every thing neceſſary to be done on ſuch an occaſion, was returning to acquaint his Lord, when a half-frantic female, ruſhing from the court into the hall, caught hold of his ſaſh, and throwing herſelf before him, impeded his progreſs: in pity-moving tones ſhe beſought him to uſe his influence with their chief, in favour of the condemned criminal, whoſe hapleſs wife ſhe was, and not, by depriving him

of life, render her six innocent children fatherless, and herself a wretched, destitute widow.

Loosing himself from her grasp, with a violence that stretched her on the floor, he bade her begone, adding with a sneer, that if she was desirous of attending her husband in the nether regions, he did not doubt but the fellow who had helped him on his journey would good-naturedly give her a lift by the same conveyance: he then proceeded to join his brother fiend, leaving her overwhelmed with despair.

Malcomb

Malcomb being informed every thing was in readinefs for the intended expedition, headed his men, and met his injured foe.

## LETTER XIII.

THE action commenced—desperate was the conflict on both sides; Alfred's vassals, animated by his example, pressed on the enemy with a fury never excelled, perhaps hardly ever equalled, breaking through their close-embattled ranks. Malcomb called aloud to his confused army, and fled through their scattering orders, encouraging them to stand firm, fighting like a lion of the forest; but he fought in vain, for the sudden yell of the

retreat

retreat shook his fearful soul with horror; yet he disdained to fly; his armour was covered with a mantle of blood, and his face purpled over with the gore of the slain. Pressed on all sides by the foe, desperation took place of reason; he rushed forward, like a falling rock, amid the thickest of the foe, and met the sword of Randolph. Terrible was the conflict between them; Randolph wished to take him prisoner, according to the commands of Alfred; vain were his endeavours, the dreadful sword of Malcomb felled him to the earth; he groaned in the agonies of death, bit the ground with anguish, and numbered his heroic soul with the illustrious

trious dead — when, lo! a figure, clad in white armour, who (inſpired by his wrongs) ſtruck the nobleſt hearts with dread, ruſhed furiouſly among the enemy, and encountering Malcomb, bade him defiance; lifting up part of his vizor, the tyrant turned pale. "Wretch," cried the unknown, "does not this countenance make thee tremble? Soon ſhalt thou feel the rapid vengeance of this well-ſtrung arm. My juſt reſentment ſhall raiſe a bleeding trophy to revenge the great indignities I have borne." Inſtantly they flew to the fight.—"Die," cried the unknown; "die, thou inhuman traitor, and from my hand receive thy puniſhment, with all the fury of my

dead

dead for's vengeance!" His well-directed sword reached the vitals of the savage Malcomber, he fell—his conqueror was on the point of repeating the blow, when Alfred, who at a distance had beheld the combat, remembering the commands of his much-loved Anna, flew to assist the dying wretch, and ordered him to be conveyed to his tent, where he was laid on a couch; he looked at Alfred, his countenance bespoke the horrors of his soul; at length he articulated, "Is there a hell? Oh, bury me deep! hide me, if possible, from the angry eye of a justly-incensed God!" Thus he lay, groaning out the poor remains of life, his limbs bathed in sweat, his heart

heart ſtruggling with convulſive throes, pains inſupportable throbbing in every pulſe, and innumerable darts of agony tranſfixing his conſcience.

In that dread moment, how the frantic ſoul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue, and ſhrieks for help;
But ſhrieks in vain! How wiſhfully ſhe looks
On all ſhe's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh! might ſhe ſtay, to waſh away her crimes,
And fit her for her paſſage! Mournful ſight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves is big with horror; but the foe,
Like a ſtaunch murd'rer, ſteady to his purpoſe,
Purſues her cloſe through every lane of life,
Nor miſſes once the track; but preſſes on;
Till, forc'd at laſt to the tremendous verge,
At once ſhe ſinks*.—

The remaining part of Malcomb's troops perceiving their leader fall,

* See a valuable poem, entitled "The Grave."

threw

threw down their arms, and entreated for quarter, which was generously granted by Alfred.

Tranquillity being thus restored, he ordered the person, who had sent the wretched soul of Malcomb howling to the dark regions of despair, to be brought before him, in order to give his reasons for disobeying the commands Alfred had issued not to kill Malcomb, but to take him prisoner.

Vain the search, he was not among the vassals of Alfred; and they informed him he had entered the field only

only a ſhort time previous to his ſtriking the fatal blow, and ſeemingly well ſatisfied with his revenge, he had precipitately quitted the ſanguine ſpot, leaving no clue by which his footſteps might be traced. This was a myſtery time only could elucidate.

Alfred ordered the body of Malcomb to be conveyed to the Caſtle, there to receive all the honours due to his high birth and rank in life.—Having wept over the pale bloody corſe of the gallant Randolph, and ſeen the wounded properly attended, giving at the ſame time orders for the burial of the ſlain, he prepared to depart. Great was his agony, as his eye

eye wandered over the breathless multitude as they lay extended on the plain; and he felt a pang at his heart which robbed him of the satisfaction occasioned by his being victorious.

"O war! ruthless war," he exclaimed, "would I had been born an humble peasant, then had I never felt the pains which at this moment agonize my throbbing bosom—never had I been the cruel cause of so much misery and bloodshed. Peace be to your manes," continued he, "for ye are happy; ye have quitted a world of woe for realms of never-fading bliss; 'tis thy hapless relations I deplore; methinks

methinks I see the wretched parents with ſtreaming eyes and hands uplifted bewailing the loſs of their beloved children; while the fond wife, the picture of deſpair, with frantic wildneſs claſps her little offspring to her maternal boſom, the tender pledges of chaſte connubial love, whiſpering in their ears that Alfred has bereft her of a huſband, and left them fatherleſs: but I will to the utmoſt of my abilities repair the injuries ye have ſuſtained—To thy helpleſs babes I will be a father, to thy widows a friend."

Having compoſed his agitated ſpirits, he turned his back upon the ſad,

ſad, ſad ſcene, and proceeded at the head of his army to the Caſtle of Malcomb, with the delightful proſpect of ſoon embracing his beloved mother, ſhould ſhe ſtill live. About ſun-ſet he reached its confines; and having encamped the principal part of his forces before it for the night, he ſent two heralds to announce his victory and the death of Malcomb; upon which the gates were opened, and he entered, attended by his officers and great men, preceded by the bier on which the once-haughty owner was laid. It was ſet down in the great hall that the vaſſals might take a laſt view of the body of their Lord, ere it was

conſigned

conſigned to the dark cold grave—Not one tear fell to his memory; on the contrary, they preſſed forward with a kind of joyous emotion: but no ones glee appeared ſo remarkable as that of a poor haggard female, attended by ſix children; in her face the cruel ravages of miſery and ſickneſs were but too viſible. She bade them claſp their little hands for joy, that the murderer of their father was no more. Alfred viewed the ſcene with aſtoniſhment, and calling the woman to him, deſired to know the reaſon of ſuch marked diſreſpect? The poor creature, terrified, fell at his feet, and informed him ſhe was the wretch-

ed

ed widow of the poor man whose days were cut short, when the discovery was made of his prisoner's escape, and that ever since she had been houseless, wanting even the common necessaries of life.

Alfred, while a tear of commiseration stole down his cheek for the misfortunes of which he had innocently been the cause, raised the half-famished mourner from her suppliant posture, bade her fear nothing—telling her he would do every thing in his power to make her happy. He then embraced the children, promising to be a parent to them while he lived; then

then dismissed the poor woman, almost frantic with joy, begging of Heaven to bless him for his goodness to her fatherless babes.

LETTER

## LETTER XIV.

HAVING thus satisfied the claims of gratitude, he flew on the wings of affection to unbar the prison in which his aged parent was confined.

Oh! what language can express the transporting feelings of a mother, on beholding an only son whom she had long thought laid in the silent tomb, and to behold in him her deliverer!—with rapture she clasped him

in her widowed arms, embraced and bleſſed her long-loſt, much-lamented child.

The firſt effuſions of joy over, Alfred related every thing which had happened ſince their parting, dwelling particularly on the beauty and amiable diſpoſition of Anna. Lady Duncomb ſoon found by his diſcourſe that the lovely unfortunate had made no ſmall impreſſion on his excellent heart. She approved his choice, and conſented to his wiſhes. Having ended his narrative, he left her to repoſe her feeble frame.

He

He gave orders to the Baron to depart immediately, with a carriage and ſervants for Lady Malcomb and her daughter, charging him as he valued his happineſs to convey them back with all ſpeed to the Caſtle. Accordingly every thing was got ready with all imaginable diſpatch, and in leſs than two hours the Baron commenced his journey to the cottage.

In the mean time the fair inmates of the humble cot had ſuffered great anxiety on Alfred's account. Lady Malcomb regarded him as her deliverer—her ſon, in whoſe protecting arms her daughter would find felicity. The lovely Anna almoſt adored him

for his goodneſs to her tender mother, and hourly offered up prayers to Heaven for his ſafety. Poſſeſſed of all the finer feelings of the ſoul, the only man except her father ſhe had ever beheld during her ſeclusion from the world—that man young, handſome, and amiable, endeavouring by every gentle aſſiduity to gain her affections: is it then to be wondered at, that gratitude in ſo young, ſo ſuſceptible a heart ſhould give way to a ſofter paſſion for the perſon who, in reſtoring her dear parent and ſelf to light, had beſtowed on them the inexpreſſible felicity of viewing the various and ſublime works of the Omnipotent? or if ſhe gave up her whole

whole soul with enthusiasm to the delicious pleasure of loving and being beloved?

Nothing material occurred during the Baron's journey. The weather was fine, the roads even, and about sun-set he reached the confines of the forest: he alighted from the carriage, and, attended by one servant, entered the narrow winding path which led directly to the humble dwelling—he quickly gained the door, lifted up the latch, and entered.

The frugal board was spread in the little parlour, if such it could be called, and the peasant and his wife with their

gueſts where ſeated round it, earneſtly converſing—the ſubject was Alfred—when the noiſe of the door opening cauſed Anna to look that way, who inſtantly recognizing the Baron, ſhrieked with joy, and, ſtarting from her chair, flew to him—laying her cold trembling hand upon his arm, and gazing intently in his face, as though ſhe expected to diſcover there her fate, exclaimed in an agony of anxiety and impatience—"How! how! how is——"—Here utterance failed, and overpowered by her emotions, ſhe ſunk convulſed upon his boſom.

Having applied for ſome time various remedies in vain, Lady Malcomb began

began to fear she would not recover, and was giving way to all the horrors of despair, when youth and a strong constitution at length gained a victory over the malady occasioned by the acuteness of her sensibility, and she once more opened her eyes, and laying her hand upon her heart, as if to quiet its violent pulsation, looked earnestly at her mother, who, comprehending her meaning, said, "Compose yourself, my dear child, your benefactor lives, and lives only to make us happy."

She raised her hands and eyes to Heaven in thankfulness for the good bestowed, and poured forth the transports

ports of her soul in a pious ejaculation to that great and beneficent Being who views with an eye of pity the errors and consequent sorrows of poor mortality.

Having by this means composed her agitated spirits, she waited with patience till the Baron had refreshed himself for the promised recital.

The frugal repast being ended, he related to them the success of Alfred, with the unaccountable conduct of the armed figure who had put a period to the existence of Malcomb.

Many

Many were the conjectures formed on this ſtrange event by the uninterested part of the company; many were the tears ſhed by the amiable Anna on receiving the news of her father's death: it is not to be ſuppoſed the Counteſs's affliction was great on the occaſion; ſhe wept, it is true, but her tears were thoſe of ſympathy and humanity.

The firſt effuſions of grief over on the part of Anna, being well aſſured, by the Baron's account, that neither Alfred nor any of his vaſſals had terminated her father's exiſtence, ſhe became calm, and retired ſoon after with her mother to reſt.

Early as the dawn they aroſe, and Anna having habited herſelf for the journey, and performed the ſame office for her mother, they deſcended to the parlour, where they found every thing in readineſs for their morning's repaſt; breakfaſt over, the Baron aroſe, and amply recompenſing the good old couple for their care and attention to the amiable mourners, departed from the hoſpitable, though humble, cottage with Lady Malcomb and her daughter.

Cloſe at the termination of the little winding path ſtood the carriage; they entered in ſilence, and began their journey to the Caſtle of Duncombe,

combe, where Alfred had promiſed to meet them.

The day was fine, every thing charmed the delighted Anna, eſpecially the motion and convenience of the coach; new wonders were continually riſing to her view, and, in the fullneſs and innocence of her heart, ſhe expreſſed her gratitude and love for the man who had put it in her power to enjoy ſuch numerous bleſſings.

Towards night the ſky became overcaſt, and by its lowering appearance, threatened them with an approaching ſtorm; big drops of rain

descended, the vivid lightning shot along the Heavens like streams of fire, followed by loud tremendous peals of thunder, which reverberated in low, hollow murmurs along the distant mountains—all nature seemed convulsed. The solemn silence which prevailed at intervals was ever and anon interrupted by the birds of night, who flew by with horrid screams in search of shelter, rendering the dreary gloom still more dreadful.

The trembling, fainting Anna threw herself into the arms of her mother for protection, who, through sickness and fatigue, was scarcely able to support

port herself, yet, forgetful of her own sufferings, she endeavoured to sooth and comfort the terrified Anna, who had never in her life beheld a scene so tremendously awful.

It was no longer in the power of the servants to disturb the carriage; the horses, affrighted by the lightning, refused the reins, and flew along the craggy road with incredible velocity, threatening, every moment, with destruction the vehicle and its inhabitants.

LETTER

## LETTER XV.

THEY had continued in this terrible situation near half an hour, when suddenly the horses fell with dreadful violence down a steep declivity; the coachman, who, unable to keep his seat, had been thrown at the same moment from his box, and rolling down the hill, had received no material injury, now came up to render the Baron and the two ladies all the service in his power. The carriage was broke by the fall; having assisted the Baron

to

to get out, they eſſayed to extricate Lady Malcomb and her daughter from their perilous ſituation; vain the attempt — without a light they found it impracticable; he ſpoke to them—they anſwered not; language is inadequate to expreſs the agonizing horror of the Baron. The ſtorm ſtill continued with unabated violence—how to aſſiſt his unfortunate companions he knew not; he claſped his hands, and raiſed his ſupplicating eyes to Heaven, when ſuddenly a flaſh of lightning, followed by another, ſhewed the turret of a caſtle; he haſtened immediately towards it, and quickly reached the gate, where, faſtened to a ruſty chain, hung a horn,

which

which applying to his lips, thrice he founded, then ſtopped—when lo! a man appeared and demanded his buſineſs; he told him his diſtreſs, and begged aſſiſtance: the porter replied, he would acquaint his Lord, who, he doubted not, would relieve him, then departed.

In leſs than ten minutes the Baron diſcovered a number of lights in the caſtle; the maſſy bolts of the gate were unlooſed, which opened with a harſh grating noiſe; the drawbridge being let down, he was deſired to enter; a tall majeſtic man met him in the hall, who ſaid his ſervants ſhould fetch the ladies to his caſtle, where

every

every assistance in his power should be afforded them.

The Baron gratefully thanked the stranger for his goodness, and departed, attended by a number of domestics bearing torches; they soon arrived at the place where the carriage lay, and with very little difficulty extricated Lady Malcomb and her daughter, who were carried to the castle to all appearance lifeless, where the domestic physician attending, ordered them to be immediately put to bed.

Anna was the first that recovered; she inquired with frantic eagerness after

after her mother; the ſervants attending aſſured her of her ſafety.

Lady Malcomb, who lay in an adjoining chamber, remained unconſcious of every occurrence, not being recovered from her fit; the phyſician having let her blood, adminiſtered a cordial, but almoſt without hope of her recovery: after near an hour's anxious expectation, heaving a deep ſigh, ſhe once more opened her eyes, and caſt them round the room with eager wildneſs, as if in ſearch of ſomething; then claſping her hands together, exclaimed, "Where is my child? my Anna! why do I not ſee her! why

why does ſhe not come and eaſe my anxious heart?"

The phyſician endeavoured to calm her perturbed mind, by aſſuring her Anna was in ſafety, but being a little indiſpoſed had been put to bed; and he doubted not that by the morning ſhe would be perfectly recovered, and able to attend on her ladyſhip; he then departed, leaving Lady Malcomb more compoſed.

She ſhortly after ſlumbered, but, alas! it did not appear ſalutary; her boſom heaved with convulſive motions—her heart fluttered—her pulſe beat quick and irregular; all theſe

ſymptoms

ſymptoms betokened an alarming fever.

Anna, unable to ſleep, had ariſen, and ſtole ſoftly to the chamber of her mother, where ſhe watched with anxious ſolicitude every change in the countenance of her revered parent. Towards morning ſhe awoke; the gentle Anna tenderly taking her hand, inquired, with fond affection, how ſhe found herſelf. Alas! how was ſhe aſtoniſhed and terrified, when, inſtead of replying, ſhe caſt on her a vacant look, turned from her, and exclaimed with frantic horror, "Save me!—Oh, ſave me from the tyrant!—Ah! what frightful ſpectre is that? Oh!

Oh! 'tis my Edmund! ſee how pale he looks!"—Then graſping the arm of her almoſt lifeleſs daughter, again exclaimed, "Monſter! are you not ſatisfied with having killed my Edmund, but you take from me my child, my darling babe?—Oh! reſtore her to my fond arms—let me ſee her ere I die—let me embrace my child and bleſs her." Quite exhauſted by the violence of her emotions, ſhe ſunk on her pillow, and remained for ſome time apparently motionleſs.

Anna, overcome with terror, was incapable of calling for aſſiſtance, and remained ſpeechleſs by her mother's ſide, with her hand claſped in hers, when

when fortunately the phyſician entered the chamber, who, perceiving the ſtate of inſenſibility into which ſhe was fallen, opened a vein, which quickly reſtored her to life, though not to reaſon; her ſpirits, however, ſeemed leſs agitated, and ſhe appeared inclined to ſleep. Anna, finding her tranquil, was at length perſuaded to quit the room, and attend their benevolent hoſts and Baron Fitzorſborne in the breakfaſt parlour, where ſhe was expected with impatience.

She inſtantly deſcended, and was conducted by the phyſician into the preſence of the three laſt-mentioned perſons. They congratulated her on her

her happy escape, and, with anxious solicitude, inquired after the health of her dear parent, and expressed their sorrow for her illness in terms the most pathetic, and grateful to the heart of an affectionate daughter.

Anna would have made acknowledgements to her kind entertainers, but felt unable—words were inadequate to express the grateful emotions of her heart; she could only take a hand of each, kissed them, and bathed them with her tears, then sunk speechless on a chair, overcome by contending passions.

The kind and benevolent lady of the

the castle cast on her a tender, melancholy look; a tear started to her eye, which she in vain endeavoured to suppress; then turned towards her Lord, whose breast seemed agitated by the same painful feelings. "Whene'er I look on that beauteous girl," she said, "she brings to my recollection our niece, my much-loved Matilda, the betrothed wife of our hapless, ill-fated Edmund!" Her spouse replied only by casting on her and Anna a glance of similar distress. The latter rising, hastily exclaimed, "Matilda! Edmund! Is it Malcomb's wife of whom you speak?"—"Yes," returned the gentleman; "didst thou know her? but, ah! no, 'tis impossible, for she

ſhe has long ſince ceaſed to breathe—herſelf and ſorrows were many years ago conſigned to the peaceful, ſilent grave! But I," raiſing his voice, his eyes ſparkling with fury, "I have revenged her death, and that of my unhappy, murdered Edmund: this ſword," claſping with vehemence the hilt, and half drawing it from the ſcabbard, "this ſword pierced the heart of the accurſed Malcomb—yes, I ſaw him vomit forth his black ſoul in torrents of blood."

At theſe words Anna again ſunk on her chair, and raiſing her hands and eyes to Heaven, with a look of indeſcribable horror and woe, re-

mained ſome time ſilent: words at length came to her aſſiſtance. "And was it thy hand," ſhe exclaimed, "that ſent him unprepared into the preſence of his Maker, with all his ſins upon his head, unrepented, unatoned?"—Then dropping on her knees, "Almighty and moſt merciful God, forgive, oh! forgive——" Here her emotions became ſo violent, that ſhe ſunk lifeleſs at their feet.

Having applied the uſual remedies on ſuch occaſions, ſhe quickly recovered, when looking alternately on Lord and Lady Douglaſs, with apparent calmneſs ſaid, "He was my father; Matilda, your niece and my mother,

mother, is——"—"Is," they both exclaimed, interrupting her, "under this roof.—Gracious Providence! how wonderful, how inſcrutable are thy ways! what unhoped felicity!" and they inſtantly flew to Lady Malcomb's chamber; they approached her bed, they ſpoke to her, they bathed her emaciated hands with tears; but, alas! ſhe was equally inſenſible of their preſence and careſſes; the quick motion of her pulſe alone informing them ſhe ſtill exiſted: finding all endeavours to awaken her from this ſtupefaction ineffectual, they were, by the deſire of the phyſician, obliged to quit her apartment.

## LETTER XVI.

ON returning to the breakfaſt parlour, they found Anna in a ſtate not not leſs pitiable, exquiſitely alive to all the finer feelings of the ſoul. She could not reflect, without horror, on her ſituation; the recent diſcovery had made an impreſſion on her mind never to be eraſed. She deſired the Baron to acquaint them with every particular relative to her mother, being herſelf unequal to the taſk, then retired.

With

With true filial affection ſhe flew to the bed-ſide of her dear ſuffering parent, determined there to await the iſſue of her diſorder.

The unfortunate Lady Malcomb continued four days in this ſtate of temporary death. Early on the morning of the fifth ſhe opened her languid eyes, and turned them on her daughter with a look of ineffable tenderneſs; her lips moved, but no ſound was heard, extreme weakneſs preventing articulation. Anna was tranſported to find her ſenſes returned—her heart dilated with joy, and ſhe fervently thanked Heaven for its

mercy, entreating bleſſings on the heads of thoſe who had been the means of her preſervation: ſo great was her gratitude and philanthropy, that ſhe prayed for pardon and bleſſings even for her father's murderer.

The phyſician ſoon after entering, pronounced her out of danger. In the courſe of two days ſhe recovered her ſpeech; the firſt words ſhe uttered were to thank her daughter for her unremitted care and attention; and to expreſs her apprehenſions leſt her health ſhould be endangered by her too cloſe attendance. Anna quieted her ſolicitude by aſſurances that ſhe

was

was perfectly well and happy, now her dear mother was in a fair way of recovery.

Lady Malcomb next defired to know to whom she was obliged for her hofpitable entertainment. Anna, with extreme caution, and at different periods, informed her of every event which had occurred fince her deprivation of reafon, occafioned by the fhock she had fuftained from the overturning of the carriage.

A faint blufh overfpread her pallid countenance at the mention of Edmund's parents; it was but momentary; fhe continued to mend, and in

the courſe of a fortnight found herſelf ſo much better, that ſhe conſented to ſee the Earl and Counteſs of Douglaſs.

Lady Malcomb collected all her fortitude in order to receive them, but had nearly ſunk under the trial; many were the bitter tears which ſad recollection forced from the eyes of theſe unfortunate mourners: at length, through the entreaties of Anna, who feared her mother's weak frame would be too much agitated, they ſeparated—the ſucceeding interviews were leſs painful; and at the cloſe of three weeks Lady Malcomb was ſo much recovered as to be moved to the

the ſofa in her dreſſing-room, where all parties met with apparent ſerenity.

One morning, as the little circle were buſied in converſation, they were ſurpriſed by the clattering of horſes; preſently the loud ſounding horn proclaimed the approach of viſitants—and Alfred, the young Earl of Duncomb, was announced, who, had by a meſſenger from the Baron received intelligence of their misfortune, with hopes of their ſpeedy appearance: but, alas! days, weeks having paſſed away, and not ſeeing any of them, he grew reſtleſs and uneaſy, and began to fear the Baron had deceived him reſpecting their

true ſituation—thus conjuring up a thouſand horrid phantoms to diſturb his repoſe. Unable longer to ſupport this torturing ſuſpenſe, he acquainted his mother with his deſign of going directly to Douglaſs Caſtle, and having previouſly conducted her to his domain, and ſettled every thing to her entire ſatisfaction, he flew on the wings of love to the place which gave ſhelter to his ſoul's beſt treaſure, his Anna, and found her and her dear mother in a far better ſtate than his apprehenſive imagination had depictured.

The young warrior was welcomed with great pleaſure by the owners of the

the Caſtle. Having received and returned their compliments, he was by his earneſt deſire conducted to the apartment of Lady Malcomb, where the gentle Anna was performing a dutenus daughter's part.

Words are inadequate to expreſs the delight which filled the boſoms of theſe three on being re-united: it was a conſiderable time before they were ſufficiently calm to converſe with any degree of eaſe. Alfred expreſſed his joy in terms the moſt animated and pleaſing at finding the mother of his dear Anna ſo much recovered; and throwing himſelf at her feet, begged

ſhe would no longer delay his happineſs, but fix an early day for making her lovely daughter his for ever.

Lady Malcomb looked at Anna; her bluſhing countenance and downcaſt eyes betrayed no repugnance to his propoſal.—"What ſays my child?" cried the fond parent; then turning to Alfred, continued with an arch ſmile, "To her deciſion I commit you; and, if I have any ſkill in phyſiognomy, ſhe will not prove cruel."

Anna, in whoſe heart the ſeeds of candour had been early ſown, and who had fatally experienced with her

dea

dear ſuffering mother the ſad effects of one act of duplicity, determined to be ingenuous.

Why! ſaid ſhe mentally, ſhould I by an affected coyneſs triſle with the happineſs of the man I love, when every wiſh of my heart is centred in one, that one is to become his wife; raiſing, therefore, her timid eyes, and extending her trembling hand, ſhe thus ſpoke:

"If Alfred can deign to accept the heart and hand of the portionleſs Anna, be aſſured it cannot be received with more pleaſure than it is given."

I wil

I will not, cannot attempt to deſcribe his rapture; thoſe who have been in a ſimilar ſituation will eaſily conceive the bliſsful ſcene!

Accordingly, with the conſent of all parties, that day week was fixed for the celebration of their nuptials.

The wiſhed-for morning at length arrived. Alfred at ſix o'clock met all the family in the breakfaſt parlour, except Lady Malcomb and her daughter, who ſhortly after appeared. Alfred flew to the bluſhing Anna, who entered the room tenderly ſupporting the emaciated frame of her mother. This excellent parent had, notwith-

notwithstanding her extreme weakness, insisted on being splendidly arrayed in honour of the happy event. After breakfast she attended this beloved daughter, (who was habited in virgin white, an emblem of her pure and spotless soul) followed by the rest of the family, to the Altar, in the chapel belonging to the Castle, where, resigning her hand to Earl Douglass, he bestowed it on the enraptured Alfred.

Anna supported herself through the awful ceremony with becoming dignity and composure, often casting a look of anxious inquiry on the very pale though serene countenance of her mother. Scarcely had the priest pronounced

nounced the nuptial benediction, and Alfred embraced his charming wife, ere Lady Malcomb fell to the earth apparently lifeleſs.

Great was the conſternation and terror which pervaded the ſo recently happy party on this melancholy occaſion: they inſtantly raiſed and conveyed her to her chamber, where laying her on a ſofa, the phyſician attending, adminiſtered every thing neceſſary to her relief; at length ſhe once more opened her languid eyes, and preſſing tenderly the hand of the agonized Anna, entreated her in low and tremulous accents to quit the room with every one elſe (ſave the phyſician)

phyſician) for a few moments; with ſome difficulty ſhe was prevailed on to conſent, and, leaning on the arm of her affectionate huſband, quitted her preſence.

Shortly after they were recalled by the phyſician, who at the ſame time retired—on entering they found Lady Malcomb ſupported by her women, in a reclining poſture, on the ſofa—the cold damp of death was on her forehead. It ſeemed as if this angelic woman had been purpoſely ſupported by the hand of Heaven juſt to ſee all her wiſhes accompliſhed with reſpect to her beloved daughter, and having

in

in this world nothing more to ask or Heaven to grant, she had begged to shake off this load of life, and, unincumbered by the trappings of mortality, to join, in the boundless expanse of Heaven, the departed spirits of her parents and lover.

She beckoned her children to the side of the couch—they knelt; Anna, almost suffocated by the violence of her emotions, hid her face in her mother's robe. Lady Malcomb, pressing the hand of each with energy, in a feeble and scarce articulate voice, often interrupted by spasms, thus spoke:

"My

"My dear children, you will shortly view in me the end of the world and all its vanities; embitter not by unavailing sorrow my last moments; to the will of an all-merciful Creator I am perfectly resigned; I have for some time felt that the tide of life was ebbing fast. Physical art was useless, it could not heal a wounded mind. I mentioned it not lest it should prevent what I most earnestly desired—the completion of your union with the worthiest of men: I die happy in leaving you a protector, whose tenderness and affection will smooth the rugged path of life. Was I to continue on this earthly globe, I never more could know felicity—past sad recollections

collections would embitter every future joy. Lament me not, my children—a few ſhort years, which in the infinity of time is nothing, and ye will rejoin me in realms of never-fading bliſs to part no more. Let not your affectionate ſorrow for me, my Anna, render you neglectful of the important duties of your ſituation as a wife."—— Here her voice became inarticulate, overcome by the exertion ſhe had made to ſooth their ſorrows; ſhe reclined her head on the pillow, ſtill retaining the claſped hands of her children. She remained ſome time ſpeechleſs, ſeemingly in earneſt prayer, when ſuddenly raiſing herſelf, her countenance beaming with divine ardour,

ardour, and caſting her eyes on all around with a look of ineffable tenderneſs, pity, and reſignation—then raiſing them towards Heaven, ſhe ſoftly ſaid—"O God of mercy! protect and bleſs my children." Then ſinking gently down with an angelic ſmile, reſigned her breath into the hands of him from whom it was received.

Thy Force alone, Religion, Death diſarms,
Breaks all his Darts, and ev'ry Viper charms;
Soften'd by thee, the griſly Form appears,
No more the horrid Object of our Fears.
We undiſmay'd this awful Pow'r obey,
That leads us thro' the ſafe tho' gloomy Way,
Which leads to Life——.

The

The ſobs which now unreſtrained burſt forth from every one quickly informed Anna of her irreparable loſs: uncovering her face and riſing, ſhe fixed her eyes firſt on the countenance of her departed parent, ſtill beautiful in death; then on Alfred's, who far from attempting to give her conſolation, which he knew would be uſeleſs till the firſt effuſions of grief were over, appeared nearly as much afflicted as herſelf—his tears fell faſt on the cold pale cheek of the deceaſed, whoſe loſs he ſincerely lamented—"And is this," cried the hapleſs bride, "the happineſs I was taught to expect on this day—this day to which I looked forward with ſo much delight? Dear, bleſſed

bleſſed Saint! I will obey you, I will not repine; Heaven is juſt, and has recalled your pure ſpirit to its native ſkies, as a reward for your many virtues."—"Forgive me, my love," ſhe continued, turning to her huſband, "I will be patient, yet 'tis hard to loſe a parent, and ſuch a parent, but I will be calm, quite calm, only one parting kiſs." Then bending ſilently over the body, ſhe fixed her lips to thoſe of her clay-cold parent, and ſunk into inſenſibility; nature being quite exhauſted by the ineffectual ſtruggles ſhe had made to appear reſigned to the divine will.

In

In this ſtate ſhe was conveyed from the ſcene of death to her chamber by her almoſt-diſtracted huſband, and with extreme difficulty was at length reſtored to life, though not to reaſon. During ten days ſhe continued in this ſtate of temporary death, perfectly inſenſible of the miſery ſhe had experienced, or of the happineſs which awaited her in the tender careſſes of an affectionate huſband; alas! ſhe was equally inſenſible of both, neither knowing nor ſpeaking to any one.

Alfred, in a ſituation of mind the moſt dreadful that can poſſibly be conceived, carefully watched every

ſymptom

ſymptom in hopes of a favourable change, hardly ever quitting her bed ſide. The phyſician informed him that the eleventh night would determine the fate of his lovely patient, as a change was about to take place. A little after twelve ſhe ſunk into a deep ſleep, ſo ſweetly tranquil, ſhe ſcarcely ſeemed to breathe. The phyſician who watched the criſis of her diſorder gave hopes that the ſleep would prove ſalutary. She continued thus eight hours, when a gentle ſigh gave notice of her awaking. On opening her languid eyes, the firſt object which preſented itſelf to her view was her huſband, who hung over the bed, at-

tending with extreme anxiety to every change in her countenance. She looked for ſome time attentively at him, as if endeavouring to recollect herſelf—then feebly graſping his hand, burſt into an agony of tears.

Alfred returned in ſilence his thanks to the ſupreme Diſpenſer of all things for this ſalutary ſhower, which proved the reſtoration of his beloved wife's reaſon, at the ſame time eaſing her overcharged heart: he attempted not to reſtrain them or ſooth her ſorrow till the firſt tranſports were ſubſided; on the contrary, he mingled his tears with hers.

The

The phyſician now pronounced her out of danger, and the tender attentions of her truly affectionate huſband in a ſhort time reſtored her mind to its former ſtate of ſerenity; though a ſoft melancholy at times pervaded her intelligent countenance, yet her health became perfectly re-eſtabliſhed, and Alfred in conſequence the happieſt of men.

## LETTER XVII.

AS Alfred was one day converſing with Earl Douglaſs on the ſad events which had rendered the life of the deceaſed Lady Malcomb ſo miſerable, he begged to know why the report of Edmund's death had been circulated? The Earl, though the taſk was painful, inſtantly related the ſeveral circumſtances which had cauſed it to be propagated and believed—the ſubſtance of which was as follows:

That

That on Edmund's arrival with the troops under his command, ſent by Lord Clifton to his relief, they gave the enemy battle, and were unfortunately defeated. Edmund, who commanded the left wing, fell at the firſt onſet; ſo great was the confuſion which prevailed on their retreat, owing to the purſuit and dreadful ſlaughter made by the victorious enemy, that they had not time, had they even thought of it, to ſeek for Edmund's body. A ceſſation of arms having been agreed to, in order that the dead might be decently interred, and the wounded properly attended, the Earl had on the following morning, with a number of his vaſſals, made

a ſtrict ſearch over the field, but were unable to diſtinguiſh the features of any one, ſo diſfigured and mangled were they by the enemy's cavalry, who had trampled without heſitation on the fallen multitude, by that means depriving thoſe of life who would otherwiſe probably have recovered—of courſe they concluded him dead, and wept his loſs.

About five years after he was informed a poor minſtrel at the gates entreated ſhelter from the inclemencies of night. He ordered him to be refreſhed, and then to attend him in the great parlour, and give a ſpecimen of his abilities.—But, great God! what

what were his ſenſations, when the minſtrel, on being ushered into his preſence, and the ſervants withdrawn, threw off his garb, and flying into his arms, diſcovered to his wondering eyes his long-loſt, much-lamented ſon!

Edmund informed him, that one of the enemy's officers, ſeeking for a friend who had fallen in battle, diſcovered ſome ſigns of life in him, and recognizing his features, thought he ſhould gain favour with his chief by ſaving his life and making him priſoner; accordingly he was conveyed to the enemy's quarters, where having recovered from his wound, he was

cloſely confined; but at length, through the humanity of his guard, he had happily eſcaped, to contribute to the felicity of his beloved parents, and be made happy (after ſuffering ſo many years of miſery) in the poſſeſſion of his adored Matilda!

"Oh!" exclaimed the agitated Earl, "what did I not feel, on being obliged to acquaint my ſon of his couſin's marriage with Lord Malcomb! He perceived by my countenance the perturbation of my mind." "Ah!" cried he, "ſome terrible event has taken place during my captivity, and you fear to tell me—perhaps my Matilda is dead; if ſo, let the ſame

ſepulchre

ſepulchre receive me, that in death at leaſt we may be united."

"No, my ſon," I replied, recovering in ſome degree from my agitation, "ſhe is not dead, but——" — "But what!" he exclaimed, interrupting me —"Oh! in mercy to my feelings, tell me what has happened—torture me no longer by this horrible ſuſpenſe, or I ſhall run diſtracted."

I endeavoured to calm him, and, by degrees, ſought to prepare his mind for the reception of the dreadful intelligence; but, alas! in ſpite of all my precaution, no ſooner did the

fatal word *married* reach his ear than he fell fainting at my feet.

A violent fever, attended with a delirium, was the conſequence, and for many weeks we hourly expected his diſſolution. Heaven at length ſeemed to hear our prayers, and he began to recover; but, alas! his intellects were greatly impaired.—Here the Earl pauſed, being almoſt ſuffocated by the violence of his emotions.

Recovering his ſpeech, "O God!" he exclaimed, wringing his hands in bitter anguiſh, "wherefore did he recover? why were we ſo deluded? what

what had we done to merit ſo dread-ful a blow, as his periſhing by the ſword of a murderer?—no friendly hand to cloſe his eyes—no pitying mortal to perform with tenderneſs the laſt ſad offices of humanity, and lay his mangled corſe with decency in the earth—no pious tongue pronounced over his body, with ſolemn fervour, the funeral ceremony—no, on the contrary, he was buried like a dog, ſo that no veſtige of the tranſaction remained, no clue by which a ſorrow-ing parent could trace out the ſpot where, enſhrouded in its native clay, lay the poor remains of a tenderly-beloved ſon; 'twas hard to be de-nied the trifling ſatisfaction of bedew-

ing the grave of him who, had he lived, would have been the ſupport, the prop of my declining years—who would have ſoothed, with true filial affection, the laſt moments of exiſtence, and rendered even the parting pangs of nature leſs terrible. O God! the dreadful retroſpection maddens my brain—but I will be calm, I will not murmur—Heaven is juſt!

"I will ſhorten as much as poſſible my melancholy tale, nor tax your ſenſibility by a too minute relation of my miſeries. Edmund, notwithſtanding our ſtricteſt care and attention, eſcaped early one morning; ſervants were immediately diſpatched various ways

ways in purſuit of the unfortunate maniac, but in vain; he eluded our ſearch, and we paſſed a whole week in the moſt torturing incertitude with reſpect to his fate. Alas! that ſuſpenſe was ended by a letter from his foſter brother, who had accompanied him to the Caſtle, and been his meſſenger to Matilda—it contained the news of his deceaſe, with every particular attending the ſad tranſaction, which he had gathered from one of the vaſſals of Malcomb, who was his friend. O Heaven! the peruſal almoſt annihilated my beloved wife, who was preſent when the letter arrived; I ſtruggled with my grief to give her conſolation, and ſucceeded ſo far, that

that she promised, for my sake, to try to live; ten years has since rolled over our heads, but time cannot obliterate his loss from our memories.

"It was not then in my power to revenge the injury I had sustained, but I was nevertheless determined on putting a period to the monster's existence, with my own hand, the first opportunity.

"Years passed away, and the wretch still survived, no moment having offered itself in which I could execute my purpose, and satisfy my just resentment: with rapture I heard of your intended battle with Malcomb, determined

determined on that day to be revenged. Accordingly, being properly equipped, I mounted my horse, and arrived at the scene of action; I fought him out; on lifting up my vizor, oh! how the monster stood aghast; he trembled every joint, a deadly paler overspread his countenance; his courage seemed to forsake him; he felt that retribution was at hand. I sheathed my sword in his body—Justice for once triumphed.

"Knowing the orders you had issued, with intent to save his life, and perceiving you with a large party coming to his assistance, I rode off,

happy

happy in having ridded the world of ſuch an execrable villain."

Thus the Earl concluded his melancholy narrative; the tear of ſoft pity wetted the cheek of Alfred for the untimely fate of the hapleſs Edmund, and his heart felt, deeply felt for the miſeries of the wretched parents; yet he ſhuddered at the premeditated vengeance of Douglaſs, and though he could not but acknowledge the injuries he had ſuſtained were inexpreſſibly great and grievous, yet his own heart was too pure, poſſeſſed too much of the milk of human kindneſs, to harbour more than a momentary

deſire

deſire of revenge, much leſs to ſeek an opportunity to ſlay his enemy in cold blood, and by that means render himſelf equally criminal.

Anna's health being perfectly re-eſtabliſhed, ſhe entreated her fond, indulgent huſband to make ſpeedy preparations for their departure to his domain, as ſhe could not, ſhe ſaid, feel herſelf happy (though greatly indebted to the Earl and Counteſs for their kindneſs to her dear mother and ſelf) in the company of the man whoſe hands were imbrued in her father's blood.

Alfred

Alfred consented with joy to her proposal, and in due time, all things being ready, they departed; Anna having previously paid the last sad tribute of affection o'er the tomb of her sainted parent, and returned her unaffected acknowledgements to the owners of the castle for their hospitality, bade them adieu.

It was not without a great degree of pleasure that she turned her back upon the gloomy mansion, having experienced in it so much misery.

Alfred was impatient to present to his mother his angelic wife: after a pleasant journey they arrived at his domain,

domain, where they were received by his numerous vaſſals with loud acclamations, and every poſſible demonſtration of joy.

He preſented Anna to his enraptured parent, who embraced her with fond affection as the wife of her beloved ſon.

Nothing was ſeen for ſeveral days but feaſting, and every face wore the ſmile of content, while the happy peaſantry ſeemed to enjoy, in the greateſt degree, the bleſſings attendant on peace.

LETTER

## LETTER XVIII.

AFTER the hurry and tumult occaſioned by their return was a little ſubſided, Alfred's vaſſals took the oaths of allegiance, and having nominated Baron Fitzorſborne as Governor of Malcomb Caſtle, they began to taſte all the delights of chaſte connubial love; happy in each other, they looked forward to years of uninterrupted bliſs, and anticipated the delight they ſhould experience in the love of a numerous progeny, whom they

they already in idea beheld ſtanding at their knees; with all the warmth of youthful imaginations they depictured, in glowing colours, their innocence and beauty, educated, and ſaw them riſe to maturity; ſettled them happily in the world, and found themſelves ſurrounded by another race of ſmiling cherubs, equal in lovelineſs and virtue with the firſt; then prayed that neither might ſurvive the other, but both at one moment, in the midſt of their children, ſink peacefully into the lap of Nature. Alas! ſhort-ſighted mortals that we are; even at the moment when they moſt prided themſelves in their ſecurity, even then

was

was the ſtorm gathering, which was to wreck their little all of happineſs.

Oh! could we but ſee into futurity, how ſeldom, if ever, ſhould we have reaſon to rejoice: happy blindneſs! bleſt inſenſibility! which Heaven, in its mercy, beſtowed on us poor mortals, knowing the evils we were born to endure; too often that thing we have taken ſo much pains to obtain proves the bane of our felicity; cauſing us to ſtand on the edge of a precipice and ſmile: thus it was with Alfred, happy in having regained the beloved manſion of his anceſtors, the ſcene of all his infant ſports, con-

quered

quered the tyrant, releaſed his adored parent from ſad captivity, and in poſſeſſing for his wife the moſt amiable of women, he fancied himſelf ſecure, and dreaded no evil.

Alas! theſe joys made him feel with double poignancy his future calamities.

In ſomewhat leſs than a year after his being acknowledged Lord of two vaſt domains, the vaſſals then under the command of the Baron revolted, and put him to death ere any aſſiſtance could be given by Alfred.

On

On the receipt of this dreadful intelligence, he ſummoned his people, and taking a heart-breaking leave of his lovely, diſtreſſed wife, and aged mother, departed at the head of his army to quell the rebels.

Heavens! what were the feelings of the unfortunate Anna, when the maſſy gates cloſed on Alfred, and ſhut him from her ſight—alas! perhaps for ever.

Previous to his departure, the unhappy mourner had knelt, wept, and ſupplicated, but all in vain, to accompany him to the field, and ſhare each

danger,

danger, hoping by her preſence to often the rigour of his deſtiny, and if he ſhould die, to ſmooth by her tender attentions the path to eternity; to hear his quivering lips pronounce a parting bleſſing, to catch his laſt breath, and then to have the melancholy ſatisfaction of ſighing away her own exiſtence on his boſom.

He preſſed her to his throbbing heart, a tear wet his cheek, and he curſed the fatal neceſſity which forced him to quit an object rendered doubly dear to him by this freſh proof of affection; quit her he muſt; as his exceſſive love made him inexorable to her entreaties, he could not for a mo-

ment endure the thoughts of expoſing her tender frame to the unavoidable fatigues attendant on ſad, deſtructive war. Language is inadequate to expreſs her agonized ſenſations;—deprived of her huſband, the world appeared a dreary wilderneſs to her ſickened fancy. Alas! none but the hapleſs, widowed wife, who has been bereaved of all her ſoul held dear on earth by the mercileſs horrors of war, owing to the ambition or wickedneſs of a few individuals, can truly ſympathize with the wretched Anna in her affliction.

But to return to Alfred; on his arrival he found the rebels had put themſelves

themselves under the protection of Duncan (a person mentioned in a former part of this history), who pretended to be the rightful heir of Malcomb, a wretch capable of the blackest villany, who had gained over the people by large promises, and by indulging them in every shameful excess, in order to obliterate from their memories his past conduct, and make them believe his former cruelties were the effects of Malcomb's commands.

Alfred finding how affairs stood, accordingly encamped before the walls of the Castle, and made every necessary preparation for a vigorous assault.

The night was dark and gloomy; fatigued with his long march, and oppreſſed by ſorrow, he retired early to his tent, where, notwithſtanding the anguiſh of his mind, tired nature gave way, and he ſhortly after ſunk to repoſe.

About twelve he was awakened by an officer, who came to inform him, that a deſerter from the Caſtle had arrived, who ſaid he had ſomething urgent to relate, which he would communicate to none but him.

Alfred aroſe, and ordering his chief officers to attend, deſired he might be brought into his preſence; on entering

tering he proſtrated himſelf before Alfred, begging his protection, at the ſame time informing him, that the rebels, tired and ſhocked by the ſhameful exceſſes and barbarities perpetrated by Duncan, had determined, one and all, to throw off the yoke and return to their duty.

He likewiſe informed Alfred, that on condition of his granting them an amneſty, they would, on a certain ſignal being made by him, let down the drawbridge, and open the gates to receive him, when he might enter with a choſen party, and take poſſeſſion of the Caſtle; Duncan and his adherents being at that time locked in the arms

of sleep, after a great carousal, of course might easily be made prisoners.

Alfred having cross examined the deserter, and not perceiving, by his answers, any sign of equivocation or embarrassment in his countenance, determined to follow the advice of his veteran soldiers, which was to arm himself, and, at the head of three hundred of his chosen troops, enter the Castle.

Accordingly, every thing being in readiness in the short space of a quarter of an hour, they marched in silence to the moat, where the deserter giving

the

the appointed signal, (it is necessary to observe, that he had his hands bound, and was guarded by two soldiers, each with a poignard at his breast, ready to strike, should his intelligence prove false) the drawbridge was let down, they passed, and received the keys in silence.

Alfred and about two hundred had entered the first court, when suddenly the vast portcullis which had been raised to let them pass, fell and crushed all beneath it, preventing any assistance from without.

Alfred, alas! too late saw his error, and determined to punish the wretch

who had thus vilely betrayed him; but to his diſappointment heard that in the moment of their ſurpriſe he had eſcaped. Armed men now ruſhed from all ſides and ſurrounded his little band—he encouraged them to ſtand firm, and not tamely ſubmit to ſlavery: they obeyed in ſilence, and fought by their beloved Lord like people determined to conquer or die: twice they cleared the court, fighting on the heaps of ſlain; but, alas! what could they do againſt the numbers which came pouring upon them from all parts of the Caſtle.

Alfred heard the cries of his people from without, who were endeavouring

vouring to ſcale the walls and come to his relief:—vain the attempt, for as faſt as they climbed the ladders they were knocked down into the foſſe below by huge fragments of ſtone and iron thrown from the battlements. At length, having ſeen all his people fall, and being himſelf covered with wounds, he was taken priſoner, manacled, and conducted into one of the dungeons under ground, more loathſome even than that he had before inhabited, where the jailer padlocking a heavy chain to his leg, which belonged to a maſſy ſtaple fixed in the lower part of the wall, to prevent his eſcaping, left him to his own melancholy reflections.

Words are infinitely too faint to express his anguish on finding himself thus torn for ever from his beloved wife and mother, who, alas! were now exposed to the assaults of a barbarous usurper, and who doubtless would not fail taking advantage of their helpless situation; all this through his own rash credulity: distracted by these dreadful reflections, he tore open his wounds, and delivered himself a prey to black despair.

The soldier appointed to carry his food found him in this terrible situation, stretched on the cold damp earth, quite exhausted with loss of blood. The man possessed humanity, and pitied

pitied his hard fate—he raised him from the ground and bound up his wounds. Alfred recovering his speech entreated to know the fate of his brave vassals whom he had left encamped? The man mournfully shook his head, and laying his finger on his lips, departed, leaving the wretched prisoner in the most torturing suspense.

Resting his burning forehead against the cold humid wall, he broke forth into the following soliloquy:

What is man? what his prerogatives? in what does his boasted pre-eminence consist? even the best

and wiſeſt cannot inſure himſelf one moment's felicity: alas! poor, vain mortal! in thy imagination alone doſt thou riſe ſuperior to the reſt of the animal creation—do they not enjoy equally with thee the bounties of nature? Ah! yes; but thou ſayeſt they poſſeſs not, like thee, the gift of reaſon. Poor creature! thou prideſt thyſelf on thy mental faculties; they cannot think—thou continueſt—why reflection is the ſource of all thy ſorrows. Happy, enviable beings! ye cannot think; memory then can never plant a thorn in thy boſoms, or the ſting of ſelf-reproach gnaw like a vulture at thy hearts. No, thou art not curſt, like man, with gifts; 'tis plain he knows

knows not how to use, or every moment of his life would not be spent in endeavouring to blind reason and banish thought.—O man! humble thy pride, nor arrogate to thyself a power over the rest of the living world, on account of a superiority existing only in thy own imagination; thou hast perverted the noblest gifts of Heaven, which, properly used, thou wouldst in a slight degree have resembled the God who gave them; but now thou art infinitely more despicable than the meanest reptile—for know, that in misery alone dost thou excel the brute world—misery occasioned by thine own self-sufficient folly.

The

The beetle, the venemous toad that crept over his body, was to him an object of envy; he prayed for a ſuſpenſion of thought, but his prayer was not granted: no, he remained feelingly alive to all the horrors of his ſituation. As we cannot relieve, we will quit him for the preſent, and return to the monſter in human ſhape who had occaſioned his ſufferings.

Duncan having taken Alfred priſoner, and afterwards cut to pieces the remainder of his little army, by that means preventing the return of any to Duncomb Caſtle with the ſad, ſad intelligence, determined to col-

leſt

left his forces, and take it by fur-prife.

Accordingly, the next morning he fet forward at the head of his troops, and by forced marches gained the foreft, on the left fide of the Caftle, diftant only half a mile, about twelve at night: having repofed themfelves a few hours after their fatigue, they recommenced their march about break of day. When they came within view of the Caftle, Duncan ordered the ftandard taken in battle from Alfred to be raifed high in the air, in hopes it might deceive the unfuf-picious inhabitants; and commanding them

them to ſhout—"Victory! Victory! Long live the brave, noble Alfred!" proceeded to the great gates.

This deception had the deſired effect; the dowager Lady Duncomb and Anna, hearing the ſhouts, flew eagerly to the ramparts, and ſeeing their ſtandard, believed it was Alfred returned victorious. Anna, tranſported with ſurpriſe and joy, haſtily deſcended the ſtairs with the keys, determined to be the firſt to welcome her beloved huſband, opened the gates: alas! fatal precipitation, thy guileleſs boſom ſuſpected not duplicity in anothers.

The

The vaſſals flocked from all parts of the Caſtle, to pay homage to their adored Lord, and congratulate him on his ſucceſs. Weak, blind mortals! ye were ruſhing on to deſtruction, ye were meeting with ſmiles the man who had devoted you to death.

Upwards of one hundred had entered ere the miſtake was diſcovered; but, alas! it was then too late, unarmed, they were quickly conquered.

Duncan did not behold the lovely Anna without emotion: he ordered her to be carried to her chamber, and every means taken to reſtore her to life,

life, for grief and horror had ſuſpended her faculties.

On coming to her ſenſes, ſhe inquired the fate of her huſband, and heard from her attendants that he had been taken priſoner—of courſe no hope of ſuccour remained. She was likewiſe informed that Lady Duncomb, horror-ſtruck at the fatal miſtake, and the carnage which enſued, had fallen into convulſions and expired.

The former dreadful intelligence had abſorbed the whole ſoul of the hapleſs Anna, and ſwallowed up every other

other grief, not one tear fell for the loſs of her mother; thoſe ſluices of ſorrow ſeemed dried up, and ſhe waited with apparent calmneſs the approach of Duncan, who had previouſly informed her of his intended viſit.

On his entrance ſhe threw herſelf at his feet, and implored him in the moſt pathetic terms to reſtore her huſband. He raiſed her from her ſuppliant poſture, bade her be comforted; that what ſhe aſked was not at preſent in his power to grant; ſaid ſhe might command him, and that every thing ſhould be done to render her happy.

He

He then retired, his whole ſoul enflamed with love, but not that ſort which renders the perſon capable of great and virtuous actions. No—he retired abſorbed by dark and villanous ideas, all tending to deſtroy that happineſs he had promiſed the lovely ill-fated Anna, whoſe beauties he was determined to poſſeſs, no matter by what means he accompliſhed his accurſed purpoſe.

LETTER

## LETTER XIX.

HAVING traverſed the Caſtle, and placed proper guards over the wretched inhabitants, ſufficiently ſtrong to render all endeavours to emancipate themſelves from his tyranny fruitleſs, he retired to bed, but not to reſt, ſleep was a ſtranger to his pillow. The lovely wife of the captive Alfred was continually before his eyes, and he determined

determined to acquaint her with his paſſion on the ſubſequent morning.

He aroſe unrefreſhed, and after reviewing his new-acquired poſſeſſions, and given orders for the interment of the Dowager Lady Duncomb, he ſent to inform the once-happy miſtreſs of the noble manſion that he intended her the honour of a viſit.

Anna aroſe on his entrance, and received him with that dignity which never failed accompanying her every action. He ſeated himſelf by her ſide, and taking one of her hands, which ſhe haſtily withdrew, without farther

farther preface informed her of his lawleſs love—concluding with theſe dreadful words, that he would leave her to conſider of his propoſal; deſiring her, as ſhe reſpected her own happineſs, to conſent to his wiſhes; to reflect ſhe was wholly in his power; if ſhe approved his paſſion, he would make her ſole miſtreſs of himſelf and fortunes; but to remember, that he neither could nor would live without her.

He might have proceeded thus for hours without interruption from Anna, for indignation and horror at his infamous propoſal had taken from her the power of ſpeech, and ſhe ſat motionleſs

motionleſs for ſome time after he had quitted the room, the pale image of deſpair, her whole ſoul harrowed up by her extreme miſery.

At length ſhe ſtarted up, and traverſing the apartment with haſty agitated ſteps, exclaimed, "No, monſter, never! never ſhall you accompliſh your baſe purpoſe; think not becauſe I am in your power, I will ever conſent. No, this hand ſhall free me from tyranny, and death ſhall diſappoint your expectations." Quite exhauſted by her emotions, ſhe ſunk breathleſs on a ſofa, where for a time ſhe gave herſelf up to deſpair; her ſenſes became ſtupified by her exceſs of miſery,

and

and ſhe waited with apparent reſigna-tion his return for her anſwer; but he came not till morning, and in that interim her mind became tranquil-lized.

Duncan, on entering her chamber, claſped her in his arms, ſaying he hoped ſhe had determined to make him the happieſt of his ſex; looſing herſelf from his embrace, ſhe replied with a look of indignation and offend-ed virtue:

"Weak, wretched man, and doſt thou think that either threats or pro-miſes can ever prevail on the wife of Duncombe to commit a deed, the

very thought of which appals her ſoul? What! become a foul adultreſs with a robber and murderer, a man whoſe hands are yet warm with the blood of her people, and who, not content with having taken from her every hope of happineſs in this world, ſeeks to deprive her of the wretch's laſt reſource, a peaceful aſylum in the grave! Wrapt in her own innocence and integrity, in the arms of death ſhe ſhould ſleep ſecurely, ſhe feared him not—a great and good God, to whom ſhe looked with confidence, would protect her; and however he might try her with afflictions for a while, would in the end crown her with never-fading happineſs."

She

She ſpoke this in ſo determined a manner, that the monſter was awed, and, unable to purſue his wicked intent, quitted her preſence in ſilence.

Though baffled in his attempt for that time, yet his intentions continued the ſame; and not thinking himſelf quite ſo ſecure there as at Malcomb Caſtle, he determined to quit as ſoon as poſſible, taking the wretched captive Anna in his train.

Accordingly he placed one of his creatures over the conquered vaſſals of Alfred, and returned to Malcomb Caſtle, having previouſly taken every thing that was valuable out of the

domain; carrying with him the hapleſs Anna, who felt a gleam of comfort at the idea of living under the ſame roof with her huſband, if he yet exiſted.

LETTER

## LETTER XX.

ON their arrival ſhe was conveyed to a grated chamber in the eaſtern turret, where ſhe was ſo cloſely guarded, that, alas! there remained no poſſibility of eſcape: her health viſibly declined; ſhe felt the alteration with pleaſure, and waited with patient reſignation her releaſe from a world of woe and wickedneſs.

Twice or thrice a week ſhe received viſits from the deteſted Duncan, who, notwithſtanding he came every time with a fixed determination to compel her to his will, felt himſelf a coward in her preſence, and never failed retiring without making the attempt—ſuch is the power of virtue over conſcious guilt.

Thus days, weeks rolled away, and the fair victim of tyranny and ambition paſſed her ſolitary hours in bewailing her hapleſs fate, and petitioning the Almighty to protect her huſband, and ſave him from the cruelty of their oppreſſor.

Oft would ſhe ſhrink appalled as the howling blaſt ſtruck on her ear, and ſhook the lone tower in which ſhe was immured.—Oft would ſhe caſt her eyes with fearful anxiety round her dreary, deſolate abode, then ſuddenly cloſe them, as if ſome frightful ſpectre had met her ſight—then, with trembling ſteps and palpitating heart, creep to her little bed. Alas! it was cold and comfortleſs, no tender huſband near to claſp her in his arms, and, by his ſoft, perſuaſive reaſoning, calm her agitation, and huſh her ſoul to peace.

Oft, on his entrance, ſhe would throw herſelf at his feet, and implore

him, in the moſt pathetic terms, to permit her to ſoften the confinement of her huſband by her preſence and tender attention; but this never failed to enrage the tyrant, and he would quit her with imprecations, and a ferocity of aſpect that made every nerve tremble.

Oft at the dead hour of night, when every inhabitant of the Caſtle was locked in the arms of ſleep, ſave the ſentinel on duty, who ſlowly paced the ramparts, and the ſolemn ſtillneſs of the hour was alone interrupted by the doleful ſhriek of the melancholy bird of night, would the miſerable captive, Anna, climb to her

grated window, and liſtening attentively, fancy, as the wind ſighed mournfully along the dreary galleries, ſhe heard, at intervals, the groans of anguiſh and deſpair, think they proceeded from her adored Alfred, cling ſtill cloſer to the grate, in hopes to catch ſome word by which ſhe might be aſſured he ſtill lived, for of that ſhe was not quite certain, though, from ſome words Duncan had dropped in the heat of paſſion, ſhe fondly believed he did.

Oft would the riſing ſun behold her there a prey to grief, when the guard, entering with proviſion, obliged her reluctantly to quit her hold, and

haſten down, leſt that ſmall comfort ſhould be denied.

Her guards were mute, therefore from them no intelligence reſpecting her own or her huſband's fate was to be obtained; three more weeks paſſed, and not having in that time beheld Duncan, ſhe began to hope he had given over all thoughts of ſubduing her to his will; but, alas! for her, no ſuch a bleſſing was in ſtore.

One night, as at her accuſtomed poſt ſhe watched the pale moon, as it ſlowly emerged from beneath the Eaſtern horizon, ſhe heard the tram-

pling

pling of feet in the gallery, which made her haſtily deſcend; in a moment after ſhe diſtinguiſhed the voice of her tyrant, as he execrated the guard for his tardineſs in undrawing the bolts: at length the door ſlowly opened, harſhly grating on its hinges, as if unwilling to admit ſo unwelcome a viſitant.

He advanced towards the terrified Anna, and taking her trembling hand, forcibly led her to a chair, and placing her on it, ſeated himſelf by her; renewed his deteſted ſolicitations, promiſing to gratify her every wiſh if ſhe complied with his deſires.

She heard him with a contemptuous ſmile, and with ſcorn rejected all his offers.

On this he aroſe, his countenance alternately changing, with rage, from fiery red to the moſt deadly pale, and ſhaking her violently by the arm, as if to enforce his words, in a voice which made every nerve tremble, thus ſpoke:

That for the laſt time he repeated his offers, and unleſs ſhe conſented to put him quietly in poſſeſſion of her perſon, he would cauſe her huſband to be put to death, having previouſly violated her before his eyes.

This

This dreadful ſpeech had nearly annihilated the wretched victim of his brutality; he was on the point of quitting her chamber, when deſpair giving her ſtrength, ſhe flew after him, and catching hold of his garments, ſunk at his feet: with hands claſped, and ſtreaming eyes, ſhe beſought him not to put ſo cruel a reſolution in force—at leaſt to allow her a ſhort time to determine.

Such youth and beauty combined in diſtreſs would have ſoftened a heart of ſtone; but, alas! his was compoſed of materials infinitely harder, for it was impenetrable. Vehemently diſengaging himſelf from her graſp,

graſp, he replied, he gave her till that day week to conſider whether ſhe would ſave her huſband; that his reſolution was irrevocably fixed, no power on earth could alter it; then left her extended on the floor in all the bitterneſs of woe.

LETTER

## LETTER XXI.

THE deſpairing, hapleſs Anna caſt her eyes round the room in ſearch of ſome implement of miſchief, to rid her of a load of life; but none appearing, ſhe aroſe in a ſtate of frenzy, accuſing Heaven of injuſtice and cruelty, in thus permitting vice to triumph, daſhed her head with violence againſt the corner of an old table, and, ſtunned by the blow, ſunk to the ground, where ſhe remained dead to the miſeries of her ſituation, till recalled

recalled to life and reaſon the next morning by the officiouſneſs of her guard—ſhe could not thank him, as exiſtence was a burden.

On being left alone, ſhe endeavoured to recall her ſcattered ideas, and finding one day of the allotted time was expired, to think of ſomething to prevent the dreaded evil.—Great God! could ſhe condemn her huſband to death!—Alas! no; it was in her power to ſave his life, by giving up her perſon—to ſave a life ſo dear, ſure Heaven would pardon the deed; but was ſhe certain, after poſſeſſion, the tyrant would fulfil his promiſe.—Oh no! a wretch capable of

of ſuch actions would not ſcruple to falſify his word; but ſuppoſing he for once held it ſacred, would not Alfred deſpiſe, execrate her, diſdain a life purchaſed at the expence of his honour; ſhe knew his high and noble ſoul, felt certain he would prefer death to life on ſuch terms. Then he muſt die, ſhe exclaimed, and we will die together—pollution I will not ſurvive.

Thus reſolved, ſhe endeavoured to compoſe her agitated ſpirits, and wait with reſignation and fortitude the evils in ſtore.

In

In vain at night she cast herself on the couch, in hopes to obtain a short respite from sorrow; sleep fled her pillow, and, like a fashionable friend, left the wretched mourner to weep.

Time, alas! quickly passed away; the last day of the allotted period expired—darkness had long spread itself over the hemisphere, the great bell in the northern turret tolled one; her feeble frame shook with horror at the sound—her blood congealed, she grew sick—it seemed to her the knell of death: a few short moments, she cried, and my preserver, my husband will be no more; fate will have done

done its worſt. She leaned her burning head upon her hand, and ſat in trembling expectation; the morning once more dawned upon her; the ſun roſe with additional ſplendour. Alas! ſaid ſhe, yon bright luminary ſhines for all the world but me—ere it has performed its diurnal courſe, I ſhall be at reſt.

About mid-day ſhe heard the trampling of feet in the gallery leading to her apartment; the door opened, and the moſt wicked of mortals entered. —"Well, Madam," he exclaimed, (ſeating himſelf by her) in a harſh tone of voice, "what is your determination? do you conſent willingly

lingly to make me the happieſt of men, and ſave your huſband's life? or, on the contrary, doom him to death, and yourſelf to ignominy, as I will, after poſſeſſion, deliver you up to the brutality of my ſoldiers?"

"O God of Mercy!" cried the agonized Lady Duncombe, "ſuſtain thy ſervant in this hour of trial; thou wilt not, I am convinced, ſuffer this monſter of iniquity to execute his wicked purpoſes—no, thou wilt releaſe me, and ſave me from pollution."

Turning to Duncan, ſhe ſaid in a firm tone, "I fear thee not; let my beloved

beloved Alfred die—can there be a more grateful ſacrifice to God than a huſband immolated at the ſhrine of his wife's honour?"

"Well, Madam," he replied, "be it ſo, he dies before your eyes, but not till he has ſeen that ſame virtue and honour, of which you make ſo great a boaſt, deſtroyed."—"No," ſhe exclaimed, "thou dareſt not; thy coward ſoul will not permit thee, in the preſence of Alfred, to commit ſo foul a deed."

A malicious grin was all his reply.

Going

Going to the door, he ordered two of the guards to fetch the priſoner, and bring him, manacled as he was, into his preſence.

Anna endeavoured to collect all her fortitude, in order to endure, without ſhrinking, this laſt ſtroke of fate. In a ſhort time Alfred appeared, loaded with irons, led by two guards, for long confinement had ſo debilitated him, that he was ſcarce able to ſtand.

Duncan, in an exulting manner, mentioned the purpoſe for which he was brought.

The

The wretched Anna, breaking from the tyrant's hold, flew to her beloved husband, and claſping him in her arms, exclaimed, "We die together, barbarian; do thy worſt on this boſom—I fear no ill!" Alfred ſtrained her to his palpitating breaſt, but rage, grief, love, all conſpiring, took from him the power of ſpeech.

Duncan deſired the guards to ſeparate them, which at firſt they ſcarcely attempted, for even their hearts, though grown callous by a long ſeries of iniquity, felt a momentary gleam of compaſſion at the diſtreſs of theſe helpleſs victims.

On

On being re-commanded in a ſterner tone, they by force tore her from him; when Duncan taking her in his arms—"Now," cried the impious wretch, "call on Heaven, and ſee if it will render thy virtue impregnable—no; were all the angelic hoſt combined to ſave thee, I would defy them—they cannot now diſappoint my wiſhes."—Then turning to the men, he bade them guard their priſoner cloſely, to prevent his moving, though it ſeemed hardly poſſible, as the heavy irons with which he was loaded had, by long confinement, eat into his fleſh, cauſing the moſt excruciating pain; but that was trifling, compared to the torments of his mind,

when

when he beheld his wife on the point of violation; rage and despair gave him strength; he broke from the men's hold, and, springing on their plunder, threw him to the earth. Anna fell with him, bleeding to the ground at the moment the point in her breast was founded by the sudden exertion. She lay for some moments immoveable, till, roused by the repeated cries of their Lord, they hurried to his assistance. Alfred lay on the stomach of Duncan, his heavy irons pressing on his body, seemed to threaten suffocation; they endeavoured to loose him from his convulsive grasp, but finding all attempts to that purpose fruitless, the

one neareſt drew forth a ſhort dagger, with intent to ſtab him in the back; Anna, perceiving the fatal weapon aimed at a life ſo dear, ſtarting up, threw herſelf between, and received the point in her boſom; ſhe ſunk bleeding to the ground; at the moment ſhe fell, another hand was raiſed, bearing an enormous hatchet; with force it fell, and at one ſtroke cleft the ſkull—not of the devoted victim, but of the wretch whoſe life 'twas meant to ſave—one long, deep groan of heart-felt anguiſh eſcaped him, and his black ſoul perhaps plunged, in all the agonies of everlaſting deſpair, into

Regions

Regions of ſorrow, doleful ſhades, where peace
And reſt can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning ſulphur unconſumed.

MILTON.

On hearing the diſmal groan, Anna exclaimed, "And have you killed my Alfred, barbarous tyrant? but remember, in terminating his life ye have alſo terminated his miſeries; I am haſtening to join him—thy malice will be diſappointed—thy power ceaſes—thou canſt not purſue us beyond the grave."

The guards for a moment ſtood transfixed with horror at what they

had done; not perceiving any motion in Alfred, they lifted him from the body, and, on examination, found his heart had ceaſed to beat; nature, exhauſted by the ſtruggle, had ſunk beneath the ſhock, and he expired without a ſigh.

They approached Anna, and endeavoured to ſtop the blood, which ſlowly trickled from her boſom down her robe, as if unwilling to quit ſo fair an habitation. "Be comforted, Lady," they cried, "thy perſecutor lies dead at thy feet; the hand which was raiſed againſt thy huſband, fell, not on him, but on the man whoſe life it was intended to preſerve."

Anna

Anna raiſed her head, and beheld with aſtoniſhment the pale, bloody corſe.—"Does my love yet live?" ſhe ſaid, in tremulous accents. The men mournfully ſhook their heads; ſhe ſighed, and continued—"I ſee he is gone; convey me to his ſide: your attempts are vain, (perceiving they were about to bind up her wound) life ebbs apace—if ye have any pity, free his body from theſe heavy irons—ſee how his poor limbs are lacerated—his ſufferings have been great, but they are paſt, vaniſhed—memory is dead, and he ſleeps as ſoundly and ſweetly as though he had never known misfortune."

Raiſing her hands and eyes to Heaven, ſhe ſoftly ſaid, "Almighty Father, I thank thee; unpolluted I ſhall join the ſainted ſpirits of my beloved huſband and mother. How great, O God! is thy power—how unerring thy juſtice—Oh! never let the virtuous ſoul deſpair, for even in the moment when hope became extinct in my boſom thou ſaved thy ſinking ſervant, ſaved her by means the moſt extraordinary, and puniſhed the wretch who would have triumphed over her innocence, in the moment of impiety, when he ſet thy power at defiance; even then was the ſword of juſtice ſuſpended over his head, and thou madeſt the miniſters of his vices the inſtruments

of

of thy vengeance, the cauſes of his deſtruction, and the bleſſed means of my emancipation." Then looking alternately on the two men who ſupported her, ſhe continued, "Never let the occurrences of this day be obliterated from thy memories; may the recollection of them make thee repent; may they prove a charm to keep thee from evil; and, oh! regard my laſt requeſt: let not our bodies be ſeparated after death, enwrap us in one ſheet, entomb us together; and may the God of mercies pardon your offences, and grant that your laſt moments may be peaceful and ſerene."

She paused, and fixing her lips to those of her departed love—she heaved a sigh, and expired on his bosom.

## LETTER XXII.

THUS died the moſt amiable of women: at the early age of ſeventeen ſhe had found life ſo full of evil, ſo chequered by misfortune, that ſhe willingly reſigned it; and in the peaceful aſylum of the tomb ſought ſhelter from the malevolence of a deceitful world, whilſt her ſoul, freed from the cumbrous load which chained it down to earth, joined in its paſſage to the manſions of everlaſting bliſs her huſbands, whereon the boſom of their kindred they doubtleſs received the reward due to unſpotted innocence,

and

and a patient reſignation to the Divine will.

The guards who had been preſent at the ſad, ſad ſcene, one of whom Heaven had made its inſtrument to execute vengeance on the wretched Duncan—the other a meſſenger of peace to the hapleſs Anna, determined religiouſly to obſerve her laſt requeſt: having paid the tribute of a tear to the memory of their ſorrows, they departed, to make ready for the mournful ceremony.

Accordingly, at the ſtill hour of night, when all nature ſeems huſhed to reſt, they depoſited them ſide by ſide

ſide in one tranquil grave, and to their memories raiſed a little hillock, which they neatly turfed, and at their heads planted a willow, which ſilently bending over the hallowed ſpot, wept their ſad fate, ſheltering the turf in ſummer from the intenſe heat of the noon-day ſun, and in winter from the keen northern blaſts; thus it was ever blooming and pure, like the ſouls which once inhabited the poor remains beneath.

The bleak winds may blow, the vivid lightnings flaſh, the thunders roll, the pityleſs ſtorm may pelt the little green ſod under which they repoſe, they will feel it not, it lies light-

ly

ly on their bosoms—they sleep in peace.

Ye poor, weak, erring mortals, who continue to wander about this transitory globe, do ye not feel envy rising in your bosoms at the recital of their present felicity; if ye do, repress the baneful passion yet a little while, and your wearied bodies shall repose in the silent tomb: let innocence and truth be your constant companions; so shall ye look forward with delightful hope and expectation to that day, which shall put a period to all your sufferings, when ye shall quit a deceitful world; like them, lay down your aching heads to rest; like them,

sweetly

ſweetly ſlumber, and in the peaceful boſom of your parent earth forget ye ever were unhappy.

No legal claimant belonging to the eſtates of Duncombe and Malcomb remaining, they were ſeized by Baliol, the ninety-ninth King of Scotland, in the year 1388; party feuds having reigned for more than a century after they were permitted to fall to decay, and all that remains of their former grandeur is a heap of ruins.

Thus, my dear friend, ended the manuſcript, which has coſt me ſome little pains to tranſcribe, as it was in many parts rendered nearly illegible, by

by the deſtroying hand of time; but, if in the peruſal it has given you any pleaſure, I ſhall be amply repaid: I can aſſure you the tranſcription has at times by engaging my attention, chaſed away many a diſagreeable thought, that would otherwiſe have intruded and diſturbed my tranquillity—that you may never experience unhappineſs in this world; but, by your ſteady adherence to your duty as a chriſtian, merit the ecſtatic bliſs reſerved for the good in the next, is the ardent prayer of your affectionate friend, H. R.

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